

## Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by LFPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to LFPP staff to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: [USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-720-0300

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact LFPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

<b>Report Date Range:</b> (e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)	September 30, 2014 – September 30, 2016
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<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Farmworker Association of Florida
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Rebuilding Local Food Systems in Farmworker Communities Project
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> (e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)	14-LFPPX-FL-0039
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Apopka, FL (main office – project was located in multiple areas)
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$100,000

LFPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

☒ Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

☐ Different individual: Name: \_\_\_\_\_; Email: \_\_\_\_\_; Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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**1. Outline of the issue/problem/community.**

Over the last two years, the Rebuilding Local Food Systems in Farmworker Communities Project has taken place in Pierson, Fellsmere, and Homestead/Florida City; the project is currently expanding to Apopka. One of the three original target areas – Homestead/Florida City – has been declared a food desert by the USDA, with both low income and low access designation. The other two original target areas – Fellsmere and Pierson – are both rural communities where the major supermarkets are nearly ten miles away and the local food access options are limited to primarily convenience stores and a few ethnic food stores. In Fellsmere and Pierson, community members are more likely to deal with transportation challenges and limited access to mass transit. Farmworker families in each of the target communities, most of whom live at or below poverty, have limited access to healthy, affordable, fresh foods due to multiple barriers, including transportation, proximity to food retail outlets, pricing of fresh food, and income level. According to U.S. Census data, the participant communities are comprised of significant minority populations, and each has a poverty rate higher than the national average of 15.1%.

	<b>Fellsmere</b>	<b>Pierson</b>	<b>Homestead</b>
<b>Latinos</b>	81.1%	54.1%	62.9%
<b>African-Americans</b>	5.4%	4.8%	20.4%
<b>Persons below poverty level</b>	29.2%	27.2%	30.3%

**State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by LFPP staff.** If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

The Rebuilding Local Food Systems goals, objectives, and activities evolved over the two-year grant period, but remained in alignment with the LFPP focus areas of assisting in the development, improvement, and/or expansion of local and regional food business enterprises that have the capacity to:

1. Increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products; and
2. Develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets.

**i. Goal/Objective 1:**

Establish/improve community gardens in three farmworker communities to serve as small-scale agriculture demonstration sites to exemplify potential farm economic development opportunities.

**a. Progress Made:**

The Campesinos’ Gardens, community gardens run by and for primarily farmworker families, were maintained in the communities of Fellsmere (established 2010), Pierson (est. 2014), and Homestead/Florida City (est. 2014) on land provided by local government. We negotiated use of the land and deepened mutually beneficial relationships with the City of Fellsmere, City of Florida City, and Town of Pierson. Throughout the last two years, garden membership has ebbed and flowed, and has ranged from a high of 71 families to

the current participating 42 families. The gardens have engaged more than 1,200 volunteers in more than 200 workdays, logged a total of 8,000+ volunteer hours (including garden members and other community volunteers), and produced 3,400+ pounds of chemical-free fruits and vegetables, which has been distributed to approximately 300 families. The volunteer labor has supported soil preparation, planting, cultivation, and harvesting; and has resulted in infrastructure developed at all three locations, including the installation of water and electric, compost systems, garden beds, irrigation, fencing, washing station, greenhouses, and storage sheds.

Each garden has also invested time to establish a garden leadership (decision-making) committee, and the rules and responsibilities of garden members. Each area conducted approximately 5 meetings annually with garden members and 10 meetings annually with garden leadership committees. Each of the gardens has established the practice of seedsaving, and one of the areas has also incorporated drying herbs and potting seedlings and cuttings, both for sale to the community. Crops grown (vegetables, fruits, herbs) included: eggplant, kale, papayas, tomatoes, tomatillos, watermelon, broccoli, sweet potatoes, jicama, squash & squash blossoms, green beans, cabbage, onion, carrots, chile peppers, potatoes, peanuts, yuca, radish, cactus, plus culinary and medicinal herbs.

FWAF facilitated campesino-a-campesino (farmer-to-farmer) knowledge exchange on natural pest control, creating biofertilizers, composting, soil health, medicinal herb uses, and seed saving during many meetings and garden workdays. Garden members also participated in trainings on permaculture and food forestry; vermiculture; soil health and how to diagnose a nutrient problem; germination, irrigation, and fertilization; natural controls for insects, pests, and disease; and food safety. FWAF partnered with allies to conduct the first Campesino-a-Campesino Agroecology Encuentro, which brought together 55 persons from 19 organizations and 4 countries in a 4-day co-learning event on agroecology and food sovereignty.

In mid-2016, FWAF established an agreement with a sister organization in Apopka, Hope CommUnity Center, to start a new location of the Campesinos' Gardens on a piece of land behind their new location. We are currently in a planning process with the staff at Hope, have begun to reach out to community members, and anticipate groundbreaking in January 2017.

**b. Impact on Community:**

Garden members, as well as FWAF staff, have significantly advanced their knowledge about growing food organically and the benefits of consuming locally-grown, chemical-free produce. In addition, the gardens have served as demonstration sites of small-scale organic agriculture, and have inspired some garden members to learn more about cooperatives and pilot 2 new sustainable agriculture cooperatives. The gardens have supported the exchange of traditional growing knowledge among community members, as well as the exchange of seeds and plants; and have also provided the space and opportunity to educate community members about the correlations between their vocation as farmworkers, exposure to pesticides and related health impacts, nutrition and health benefits of growing food without the use of toxic chemicals for local families and community, as well as the opportunity to critically assess how food is produced on a mass

scale, the environmental and human health effects of conventional agriculture, and farmworkers' role in changing the food system.

**ii. Goal/Objective 2:**

Establish/improve farmers' markets within the target low-income, socially-disadvantaged communities for the purpose of supporting food and farm economic development opportunities and to facilitate community members' access to locally grown foods.

**a. Progress Made:**

During the two-year grant period, we worked with community allies in Fellsmere to establish a new farmers' market. The market operated for approximately one year, but ultimately struggled to attract local community members as patrons. Prior to and following this effort, in the area of Fellsmere, FWAf worked with local ethnic food stores and a new local produce market to purchase and vend fresh produce from the Campesinos' Garden, as well as from local backyard farmers. This effort had limited success, but is something that could be developed further in the future.

Other efforts to improve farmworkers' accessibility to locally-grown produce from the gardens, backyard farmers, and other local Latino small farmers included: selling/distributing Campesinos' Garden produce through FWAf offices, at a weekly food distribution site, at local health fairs and cultural events, at pop-up markets at the garden sites, at a local produce stand in Pierson, and at a nearby farmers' market in Opa-Locka. During the last year, in Homestead, FWAf has organized 4 Feria y Mercado events, which have been attended by more than 230 community members, and which have combined the sale of fresh produce and seedlings, and the provision of workshops on agroecological growing methods and culinary and medicinal uses of plants.

In order to support low-income families purchasing fresh food from the local produce vendor in Pierson who accepts SNAP benefits, as opposed to travelling more than 10 miles away to the nearest grocery store, we have been assisting with enrollment in the SNAP benefits program. During the last two years, we have assisted nearly 200 families in applying for or renewing SNAP benefits, and have informed them that they can use these benefits at the local produce stand.

Also, in the Homestead area, we have been discussing partnering with War on Poverty to create a food hub to serve South Florida. If initiated, our role would be to connect Latino small farmers to the food hub, which may be sited in Homestead or Miami Gardens. This would also be a market option for excess produce from the Campesinos' Gardens, as well as a new sustainable agriculture cooperative in this area that we are supporting through the provision of technical assistance.

**b. Impact on Community:**

Ideally, each of the target communities – Pierson, Fellsmere, and Homestead/Florida City – would have their own well-functioning local farmers market in an area that is accessible to the farmworker community. However, this does not currently exist in any of these communities, nor in the new target community of Apopka. Our experience in Fellsmere taught us that to initiate and maintain a farmers' market takes human and monetary resources that we do not have available at this time. However, we do have the ability to

host pop-up markets in FWAF spaces, as well as to experiment with small-scale community-supported agriculture (CSA) models. We also see great potential working with local ethnic food stores and local produce markets/stands to purchase and sell locally-produced fruits and vegetables, but it will require work on the educational component to be able to inform consumers of the distinction and health benefits of the product – locally-grown and chemical-free. The efforts that we have made over the last two years to increase the accessibility of locally-grown, chemical-free produce have been well-received, and we have experienced many instances of community members asking for more product, including potted plants for them to take home to plant.

**iii. Goal/Objective 3:**

Provide education on organic production methods, and support for aspiring small farmers.

**a. Progress Made:**

As mentioned above, garden members, community members, and FWAF staff had the opportunity to participate in several trainings and workshops during the last two years, including: natural pest control, creating biofertilizers, composting, soil health, medicinal herb uses, seed saving; permaculture and food forestry; vermiculture; soil health and how to diagnose a nutrient problem; germination, irrigation, and fertilization; natural controls for insects, pests, and disease; and food safety.

Over the last 18-months, we have worked closely with Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC) in Minnesota, who have conducted more than 20 workshops/trainings on cooperative development in all 3 target areas, with a total attendance of 110+ community members. They have worked most closely with two groups of farmworkers – one in Pierson and one in Homestead – who are currently starting sustainable agriculture cooperatives. At present, the 2 new cooperatives are utilizing space within the Campesinos' Gardens to pilot the cooperatives and to learn about growing organically. FWAF is currently providing technical assistance to the 2 new cooperatives, and we are designing a framework for an agroecology and cooperative development school to provide more structured support for the cooperatives. We are assisting them with the business start-up phases, looking for land options, and will soon help them to determine their market options.

Also, 3 FWAF staff members visited the Latino Economic Development Center in Minnesota, and visited 2 successful sustainable agriculture cooperatives that they helped to start with former farmworkers; and FWAF worked with allies, including LEDC, Southern Grassroots Economies Project, and others, to conduct a 2-day conference on cooperatives, which was attended by approximately 40 persons.

**b. Impact on Community:**

Community members increased their knowledge of soil health, natural pest controls, other organic production techniques, and medicinal uses of plants. They also increased their knowledge of the benefits and challenges of cooperative structure.

**2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.**

- i. **Number of direct jobs created:** 7 + 2 to-be-hired
  - ii. **Number of jobs retained:** 7
  - iii. **Number of indirect jobs created:** 6 (new co-op worker-owners)
  - iv. **Number of markets expanded:** 0
  - v. **Number of new markets established:** 4 (although 1 is no longer functioning, 2 are sporadic – work in progress, and the other 1 is one that we participated in – did not establish ourselves – and is currently transitioning to a new location)
  - vi. **Market sales increased by \$ 1,200 and increased by 100%** (these were new markets).
  - vii. **Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:**  
71 community gardeners, approximately 30 backyard gardeners, and 6 sustainable ag co-op worker-owners
- a. Percent Increase:**

**3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? Yes. If so, how?**

Distribution of the fresh, chemical-free produce from the Campesinos' Gardens reached low-income, low-access community members who are primarily Latino, but also include Haitian community members. The produce reached these community members through distribution and sale at FWAF offices, at community events, at pop-up markets, at farmers' markets, and at local ethnic food stores and produce stands. In addition, the farmers' market that we participated in in Opa-Locka reached primarily low-income African American consumers.

**4. Discuss your community partnerships.**

**i. Who are your community partners?**

Our primary community partners are the City of Fellsmere, City of Florida City, Town of Pierson, Hope CommUnity Center. We have also partnered with Rural Coalition, La Via Campesina, North-South Institute, Latino Economic Development Center, and the local extension office and local USDA offices. We also are now partnering with the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives to spread agroecology, food sovereignty, and cooperative development among Black and Brown campesino communities in the Southeast.

**i. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?**

The local governments and Hope CommUnity Center provide land and other support for the Campesinos' Gardens. Rural Coalition and La Via Campesina co-organized/hosted the Agroecology Encuentro. WhyHunger and La Via Campesina helped to organize and facilitate a study group on agroecology and food sovereignty. The North-South Institute provided the educational program about USDA resources/programs. Latino Economic Development Center provided workshops, training, and technical assistance on cooperative structure. Local extension offices have provided trainings and Master Gardener expertise. The local USDA conservation office in the Pierson area donated and

installed the irrigation system. And, local farmers partnered with us to provide produce for the Mercado in Homestead.

**ii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?**

We will continue to partner with each of these groups in similar capacity as we have over the past two years.

**5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?**

We only contracted with two persons to co-facilitate the Agroecology Encuentro. These expenses were supported by another grant.

**6. Have you publicized any results yet?\*** Yes – specifically related to the Agroecology Encuentro.

**i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?**

An article about the Agroecology Encuentro (conducted in Feb 2015) was written and posted on the websites of La Via Campesina and the Farmworker Association of Florida. We also completed a comprehensive report on the planning process of the Agroecology Encuentro so that other groups could utilize it as a resource to plan a similar event.

**ii. To whom did you publicize the results?**

Posted on the web. The report was distributed to the farmworker and small farmer groups that participated in the Encuentro, as well as a few support organizations.

**iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?**

Approximately 10 farmworker and small farmer organizations, 5 grassroots support organizations, and unknown web viewers.

\*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed & emailed with this report (do not send the actual item). (attached)

**7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?** Yes.

**i. If so, how did you collect the information?**

The Campesinos' Gardens are evaluated on an on-going basis by the garden decision-making committees in each area. We conducted a brief survey of participants following the Agroecology Encuentro, and conducted an internal evaluation of the event. We have conducted brief oral evaluations at the end of the educational sessions on cooperative development, during garden leadership meetings, and following the Feria y Mercado events. Also, we are also currently in an evaluative process to secure input from external partners – WhyHunger and Latino Economic Development Center – on the overall project.

ii. **What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?**

Regarding the Agroecology Encuentro, members from BoricuA in Puerto Rico offered the following comments: "The Encounter was very important for Boricuá for various reasons. It was a great opportunity to connect with "sister/brother" organizations in the US. We are always extremely grateful when we can teach others by our experiences. And establishing working relationships with our friends in the US has been awesome! We have continued building upon the relationships we built at the encounter .... I personally think that meeting people face to face can never be substituted with digital meetings. It's the best way to connect with fellow groups and mirror our experiences: hardships and victories included."

In other evaluative spaces: garden members have expressed their interest in trying different membership structures, including converting the garden space to entirely a communal growing space versus individual plots, and testing a consumer garden membership for purchasing food grown in the garden; community members have expressed their interest in receiving more training about agricultural cooperatives and resources available, as well as receiving technical assistance in starting cooperatives; and, in Homestead, they also expressed their desire to continue the Feria y Mercado model of increasing accessibility to fresh organic produce and educational workshops.

**8. Budget Summary:**

i. **As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:** ☒

ii. **Did the project generate any income?** Yes.

a. **If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?** Less than \$2,000 was earned from the sale of fresh vegetables & fruits, dried herbs, and seedlings. These dollars were re-invested back into the Campesinos' Gardens.

**9. Lessons Learned:**

i. **Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).**

Some of the key lessons learned were:

- Campesino-a-campesino methodology – It definitely worked well to use this teaching methodology where community members, peasant-to-peasant or farmer-to-farmer, share their knowledge of growing plants, installing garden infrastructure, and culinary and medicinal uses of plants. As the garden members learned together about organic techniques, such as composting, making and using biofertilizers, and natural pest control methods, they were able to share this knowledge with other community members through co-learning spaces in the garden and Feria y Mercado activities.
- Recordkeeping – The Campesinos' Gardens community garden model is structured set up demonstration sites of small-scale sustainable agriculture. For this reason,



we have established thorough recordkeeping systems to track labor hours, plant cycles and challenges, solutions to problems such as pests or flooding, input costs, and crop yield and distribution.

- **Markets and Cooperatives** – While we originally intended to focus efforts on establishing and/or improving local farmers’ markets, the project took a different direction on the ground. Challenges surfaced with working directly on farmers’ markets (explained further below), and the community participants in the project wanted to focus on increasing the availability and accessibility of healthier foods by increasing local production and supporting farmworkers to become farmers. Community members have responded well to the establishment of cooperatives and they appreciate the concept of shared risk and shared reward; however, there is much ahead to learn about the effective functioning of a cooperative and accessing resources, such as land and markets. For this reason, FWAF has committed to providing technical assistance to the cooperatives and to establishing a framework to pilot an agroecology and cooperative development school.

**ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:**

The goal to establish and/or improve farmers’ markets within the target communities did not advance as we had originally envisioned. At the beginning of the project, we were part of a community effort in Fellsmere to establish and maintain a simple farmers market. It functioned well for about a year, and we thought it would continue, but in the end it was drawing more people from outside the community than from the low-income community itself. The participants decided to suspend the market, and it never did restart. The experience did teach us that the market was a labor-intensive endeavor that we would not have the capacity to carry on our own. Due to the magnitude of time and resources dedicated to Campesinos’ Gardens start-up in the other 2 target communities, we were not able to give immediate attention to farmers’ market options in those areas during the early days of the project. We were able to shift the work of the project to include other methods of supporting local food promotion, including promoting produce stands that were selling some local products, the development of sustainable agriculture cooperatives within the farmworker community, participation in other nearby farmers’ markets, selling garden produce to local ethnic food stores, and experimenting with selling produce directly to low-income community members through FWAF offices and through Feria y Mercado events. We have also participated in discussions to explore the option of partnering on the establishment of a food hub proposed by War on Poverty to serve South Florida.

**iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:**

The Rebuilding Local Food Systems in Farmworker Communities Project engages mostly farmworker families. A couple of challenges presented by this include: regular and on-going participation, since we are asking folks who work in the fields/groves/nurseries all day for their employment to then come to the gardens on their time off to grow food for their families; and participants’ understanding of the importance and purpose of recordkeeping. Over the course of the project, though, many community members have evolved to place great value on the opportunity to participate in community space to grow food for their families and communities, which includes the provision of seeds,

compost, soil, and other inputs; and the garden members are now accustomed to the recordkeeping procedures, which is especially valuable to those who are now embarking upon the establishment of sustainable agriculture cooperatives.

#### **10. Future Work:**

- i. **How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.**

The Campesinos' Gardens will continue as demonstration sites of small-scale agriculture in each of the 3 target communities, as well as the new target community of Apopka. In each of these communities, we will continue to work to identify the most strategic and effective methods to distribute the fresh produce from the gardens within the low-income community. We plan to continue to implement the Feria y Mercado events, explore selling to local ethnic food stores and produce markets/stands and incorporate educational materials about the benefits of eating food that is locally-grown and chemical-free, explore a community-supported agriculture model of crop distribution, and explore the proposed food hub in South Florida. We will also continue to provide technical support to new sustainable agriculture cooperatives, and in 2017 will pilot our agroecology and cooperative development school designed to provide the technical assistance needed for the cooperatives to ultimately function well independent FWAF support.

- ii. **Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?**

As the project evolves over the next couple of years, and the cooperatives gain experience, we will need to research how to attain a fair price for their organically-produced fruits and vegetables, while maintaining our commitment to making better food accessible to low-income community members. This may involve a combination of selling a portion of the produce external to the community for a premium, and selling a portion of the produce within the community at affordable prices. This research will also involve time spent educating local vendors (produce stands and ethnic food stores) and consumers on the distinctions of the produce and why it is a superior product – the nutritional benefits of garden-ripened fruits grown without chemicals, and the environmental benefits of produce grown locally and without chemicals.